

July
2019

MONTHLY DATA REPORT



Consumer Affairs Branch

California Public
Utilities Commission



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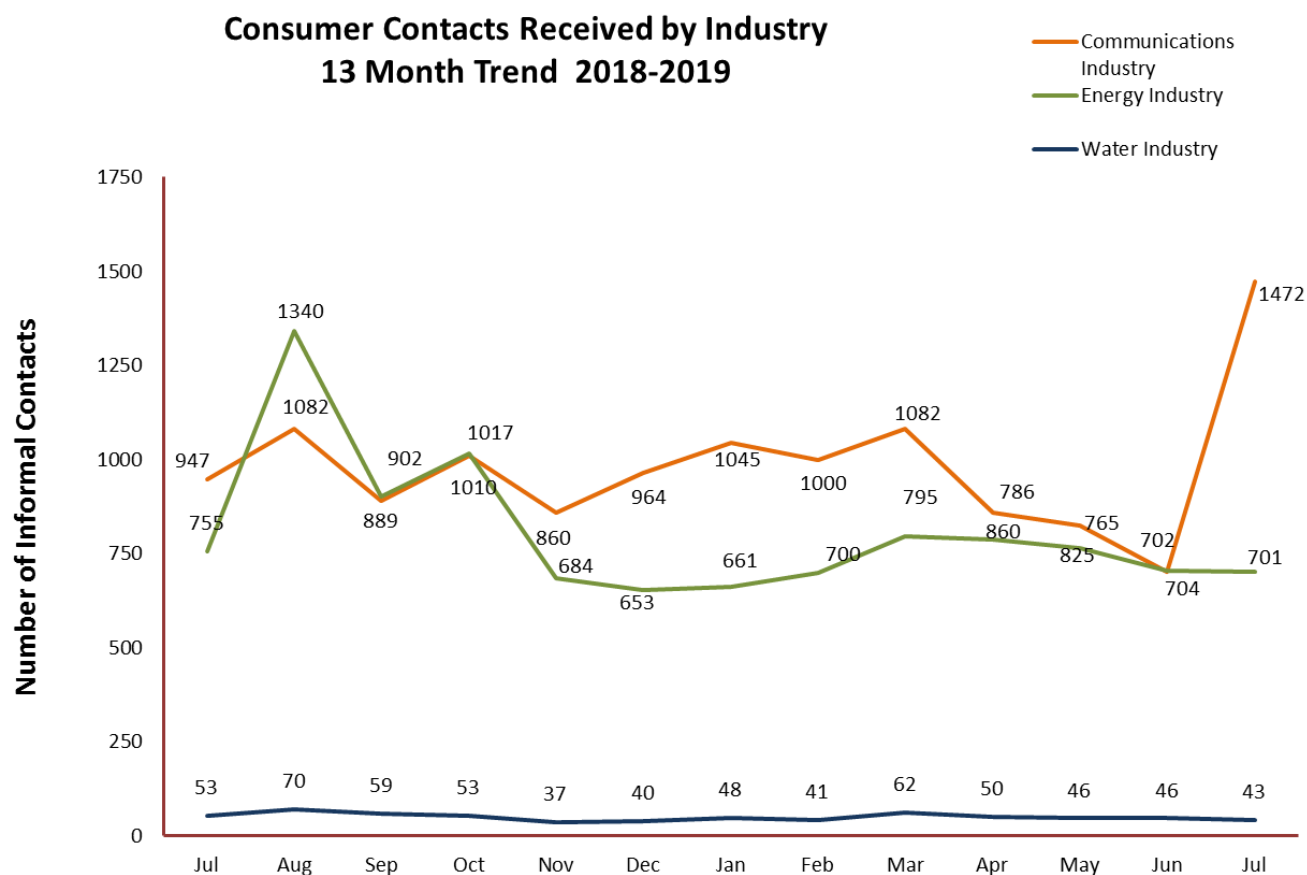
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The Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) serves the public interest and the mission of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) by assisting consumers in resolving their informal complaints against service providers under the Commission's jurisdiction. CAB is proud to be able to assist consumers with an informal complaint resolution process, with answers to questions, and with referral information. In assisting consumers, we are able to gain a useful picture of consumer issues and trends.

This report is based on contacts (informal complaints and questions) received by the Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) and presents both annual and monthly data for the communications, energy, and water industries. Page 2 presents annual trend data and Page 3 through Page 5 report data by industry for the current month. For context, the report also includes comparable data from the previous month. Page 6 presents contact data specifically related to safety concerns, by industry. A glossary of terms used in this report can be found on Page 7.

Overview

2,216 CONTACTS (June 2019)



Overall, 2,216 total informal consumer contacts were received during July across the three regulated industries. July 2019 shows an increase of 52.6% from the 1,452 informal contacts received during June; and a 22.0% increase from the prior 12-month average of 1,817. (*Transportation is no longer covered in the CAB Monthly report as of June 2019 which contributed to the decrease in overall Monthly report count.*)

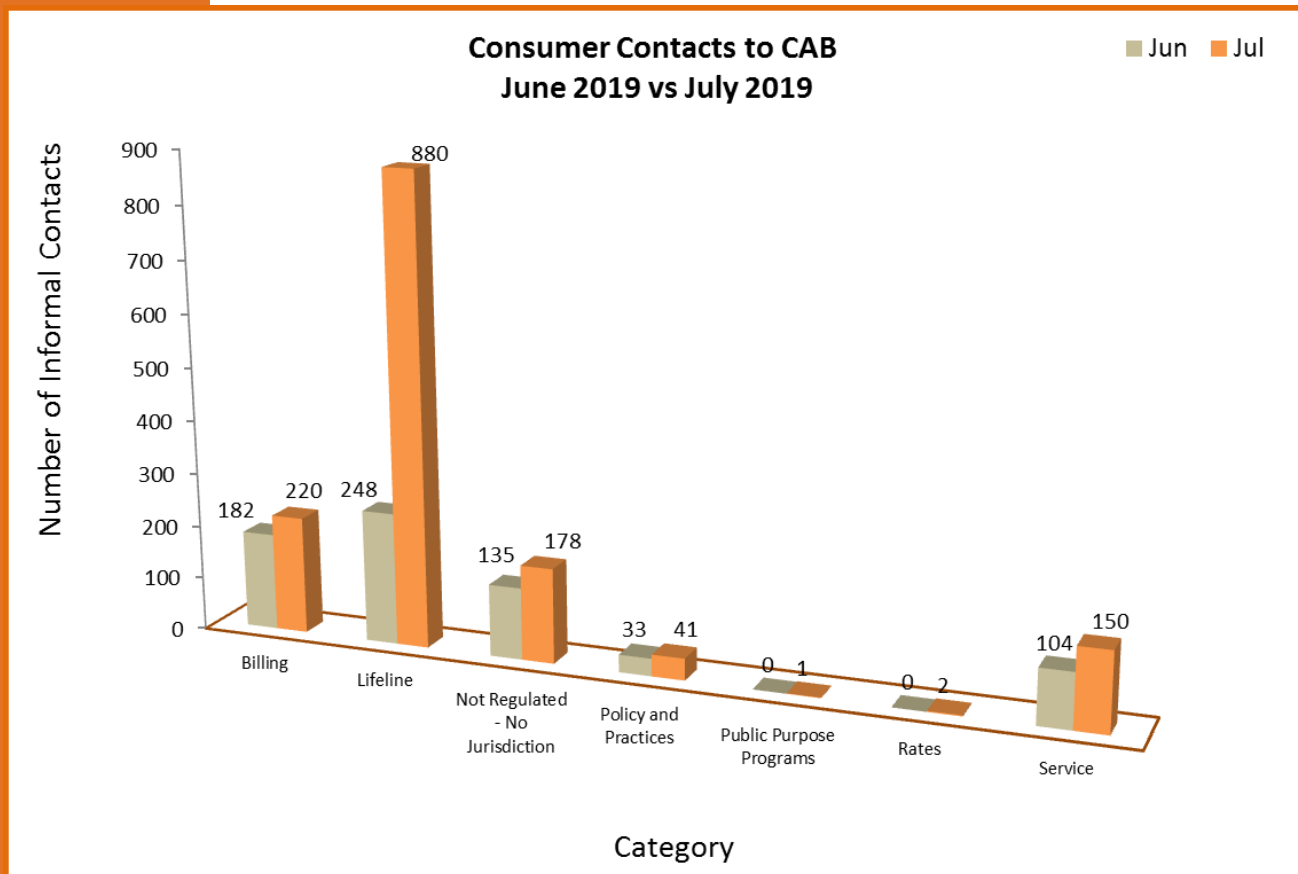
Communications: 1,472 categorized informal contacts related to Communications were received during July, which is an increase of 102.4% from the 739 contacts received during June. The contacts received during July are 56.8% higher than the prior 12-month average of 939.

Energy: 701 categorized informal contacts related to Energy were received during July 2019, which is a decrease of 0.4% from 704 contacts received during June. Contacts received in July are 13.8% lower than the prior 12-month average of 814.

Water: 43 categorized informal contacts related to Water were received during July 2019, which is a decrease of 6.5% from 46 contacts received during June. Water contacts received in July are 14.7% lower than the prior 12-month average of 50.

Communications

1,472 CONTACTS (July 2019)



During July 2019, CAB received 702 Communications-related informal contacts, allocated into one of the defined categories of Billing, LifeLine, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service.

Billing related contacts shows a decrease of 20.9% in July as compared to June. Increased High Bill contacts amongst several entities such as AT&T California, Frontier, and AT&T Mobility were the primary contributors.

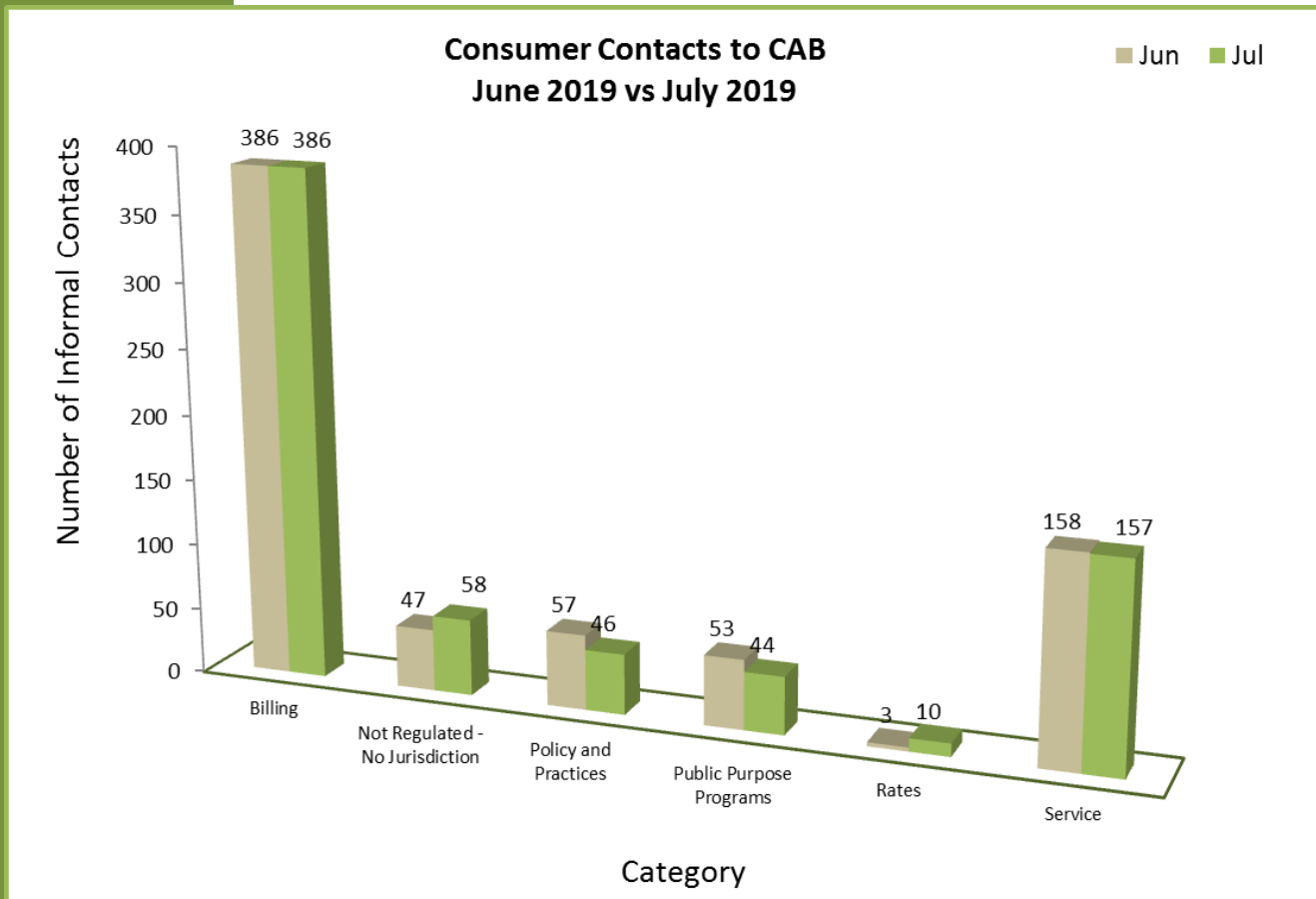
Lifeline related contacts shows a significant increase of 254.8% in July as compared to the previous month. Increased contacts in Identity verification and Policy and Practice subcategories were the primary contributors. Furthermore, ongoing Issues with the Lifeline Third Party Administrator were the reason for the increase in consumer contacts in July.

In addition, Service-related contacts increased by 44.2% in July. Increase in both Call Quality amongst several entities and outage complaints with AT&T California and Frontier California Inc. contributed to increase in July.

In addition to the 702 categorized contacts, CAB received 96 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

Energy

701 CONTACTS (July 2019)



In July, CAB received 701 Energy-related informal contacts allocated amongst the six defined categories of Billing, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service.

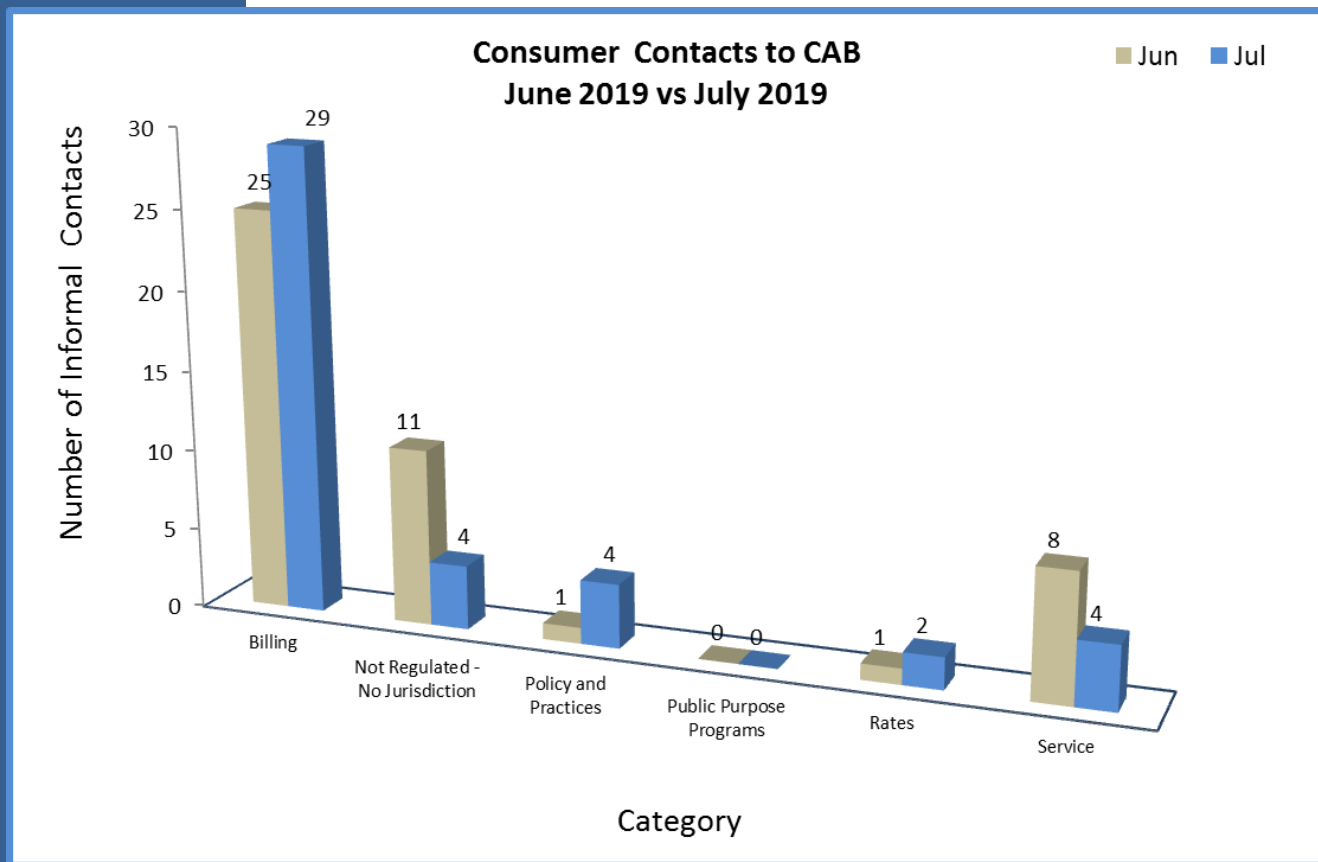
Policy and Practices related show a decrease of 19.3%. Cases related to de-energization by PG&E has since decreased from June to July.

Public Purpose Programs related contacts decreased by 17.0% in July. The decrease was evenly distributed across several subcategories with no particular entity as the primary contributor.

In addition to the 701 categorized contacts, CAB also received 56 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

Water

43 CONTACTS (July 2019)



CAB received 43 Water-related informal contacts in July, allocated into one of the six defined categories of Billing, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service.

Billing related cases shows an increase of 16.0% between June and July. The total water contacts did not change much in July but Billing and service related contacts experienced an increase of 16.0% while Service decreased by 50%. The increase in contacts in Billing and service is equally distributed amongst several utilities with no particular entity as a primary contributor.

In addition to the 43 categorized contacts, CAB also received 8 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

Safety Concerns Across Industries

During July 2019, CPED received **40** contacts identified as having a safety component across reported industries. The contacts presented below are a subset of those presented on pages 3-6 of this report. Safety contacts are classified by the type of safety concern.

Communications	16
Emergency Services/Health Concerns	9
Property Restoration	2
Utility Infrastructure	5

Energy	21
Company Practice	1
Consumer Property	1
Emergency Services/Health Concerns	4
Property Restoration	5
Utility Infrastructure	10

Water	3
Company Practice	1
Water Quality	1
Utility Infrastructure	1

Definitions for Safety-Related Contacts:

Company Practice includes service-related issues perceived to impact consumer safety such as lengthy appointment wait times for service restoration.

Consumer Property includes issues with consumer owned property such as unsafe appliances (heaters, stoves, etc.)

EMF/Power Surges/Voltage fluctuations include cases related to Electromagnetic Field (EMF) concerns (e.g. Smart Meters), consumer household power surges and electricity voltage fluctuations.

Emergency Services/ Health Concerns include immediate or perceived concerns due to potential outages or events, such as inability to reach 911 during phone outage, or failure of medical equipment during power outages.

Gas Leak includes any concerns related to gas leaks in the utility distribution system or in the consumer's premises.

Operating Without Active Authority involves operations without a valid permit or certificate, including operations with a suspended or revoked permit or certificate.

Property Restoration includes issues regarding ground hazards such as holes, trenches, tripping hazards, debris removal, tree trimming and street lighting.

Security Concerns includes issues perceived to impact consumer security such as phone line privacy issues, unlisted phone numbers, or utility personnel identification.

Utility Infrastructure includes issues regarding infrastructure that is faulty or in disrepair such as hanging cables, exposed wires, leaning utility poles, analog meters and transformers.

Water Safety or Quality includes immediate or perceived concerns relating to water quality such as color, odor or presence of chemicals in drinking water.

Definitions

Consumer Affairs Branch

The following definitions were compiled to assist with understanding consumer contacts information.

Type of Contacts Definitions	
Informal Consumer Contacts	Informal Contacts are consumers' communications received by CAB via phone calls, letters and electronic submissions (email/web form). Contacts can consist of complaints, questions, or feedback from consumers regarding the policies and practices of specific utilities or the CPUC. These contacts are reported as Categorized or Uncategorized.
Categorized Contacts	These are informal contacts which have sufficient information to be allocated into one the defined categories: Billing, Lifeline, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, and Service based on the primary (overarching) reason for the contact.
Uncategorized Contacts	These are contacts which are pending assignment, lack sufficient information to be processed (Unknown), or contacts in which the consumer intended to contact some other entity, and mistakenly contacted CAB (Misdirected).

Category Definitions	
Billing	Consumer contacts related to disputed items appearing on a consumer's utility bill, the appearance of the bill, or other utility charges.
LifeLine (Billing & Appeals)	Consumer contacts related to the Lifeline Program, which assists low income telecommunications customers. It includes items related to Lifeline Appeals or Lifeline Billing disputes.
Not Regulated – No Jurisdiction	Consumer contacts related to concerns, disputes, and issues where the CPUC does not have jurisdiction.
Policy and Practices	Consumer contacts related to utility and/or CPUC policies and practices.
Public Purpose Programs	Consumer contacts related to programs that assist utility consumers, including income-based and disability-based programs.
Rates	Consumer contacts related to rate design, rate protests and baseline rates.
Service	Consumer contacts related to the service provided to the consumer by the utility.
Uncategorized Definitions	
Misdirected	Consumer contacts intended for some other entity such as consumer attempting to contact their utility. CAB assists these consumers by redirecting them to the entity best able to address their concerns.
Pending Assignment	Category not identified due to case pending processing.
Unknown	Category not identified due to lack of information from consumer.